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OREGON WHEAT

An Official Publication of the Oregon Wheat Industry

IN THIS ISSUE

OREGON WHEAT GROWERS LEAGUE
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IN THIS ISSUE

ON THE COVER: *Photo by Theresa Peterson*

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Time Flies When You Are Having Fun

Collin Crocker

President

MY TWO CENTS WORTH

When Jerry Marguth recruited me into the role for South Willamette Valley County President, I did not know what I was signing up for. Sometimes, trusting that a mentor knows you well is the best move, and in following Jerry's footsteps, I have not been led astray. If I had known when I said yes to joining the Oregon Wheat Growers League Board- and ultimately deciding to run for an officer position- how much I would get out of the experience, it would have been a quick sell.

During my time of the League Board and serving as an officer, I have received as much as I have given. As the saying goes 'time flies when you are having fun' and that saying has defined this year, in particular. I had a really good time doing it, even with an extra year due to the pandemic disruptions! There were many highlights during my year as President, including:

- Attending County League member meetings. They provided an interface with members to talk about issues impacting their farms. Getting in a pickup to ride around and visit operations – particularly dryland- opened my eyes to the concerns of our members around the state.
- Hosting Wheat Day at the Capitol, with our first year on the legislative reception. The unique experience of getting on the Senate floor, thanks to Senator Hansell, was an honor. Being able to hear the courtesies read, acknowledging the hard work of our wheat producers, while sitting next to the Senator is unforgettable. The League is like our producers: we are scrappy and innovative and as a result of working with trusted legislators across the aisle, we have had a larger voice at the Capitol.
- Representing Oregon Wheat and the National Association of Wheat Growers in Washington DC. It is not an activity I would want to do every day, but it is essential to having a voice in policy decisions that impact our farms. In this year, with Farm Bill renewal, it is even more critical.
- Working with Oregon State University researchers and participating in field days. There is a dedicated and knowledgeable group of individuals, funded in part by the Oregon Wheat Commission, working to address challenges we are dealing with out in the field and preparing for challenges ahead.
- Attending the Growers Workshop, with an opportunity to understand why quality is so important to our millers and how the decisions I make from planting to yearly production management can affect future Oregon Wheat market opportunities.
- Working with the League staff. CEO Amanda Hoey, prior Administrative Assistant Cassandra Franklin and Program Director Jason Flowers. They give their hearts and energy each day to the organization and our membership.

As I come to the end of my term, uncertainties remain that require our membership to continue to engage effectively in supporting the League to be the voice for all of us, especially in relation to development of the next Farm Bill. While the Farm Bill technically expired in September, there is some runway to the end of the calendar year before real consequences come into play. Like the jug of milk in my fridge, it will last for a certain amount of time beyond its expiration. However, there comes a point when it requires a replacement, or it turns sour. As I write this article, the pathway looks like a potential extension to allow time to work through the next Farm Bill fully.

There is always unfinished business at the end of a term, but I know I leave the role of President in very good hands. I want to thank our League Executive team and Board members, who dedicate their time and energy to advocate on behalf of all Oregon wheat producers and provide strategic direction to the organization. I have the utmost confidence in the incoming Executive Team leadership, under the guidance of incoming President Wade Bingman. I am excited to see Thad Eakin moving into an officer role, expanding the young grower perspective. I want to thank our talented staff at the League and all our members, who are the Association and everything we represent. Finally, and most especially, a thank you to my wife and family who have allowed me the opportunity to serve in this role, while keeping things moving at the farm. It has been a privilege to serve this year as the Oregon Wheat Growers League President.

Oregon Growers Take Top Honors in Yield Contest

The National Wheat Yield Contest announced the achievements of its 24 national winners. Oregon growers took top honors in the winter wheat dryland and spring wheat irrigated categories.

Winter Wheat-Dryland

Bin Buster Dick Judah, Yamhill County, OR

1st Derek Berger, Yamhill County, OR

Spring Wheat-Irrigated

1st Jess Blatchford, Baker County, OR

The contest, held by the National Wheat Foundation, encourages wheat growers to strive for high yield, quality and profit while trying new and innovative management strategies in their wheat. The dryland winter wheat category was the most competitive of the contest with over 280 entries. Dick Judah, who farms with Berger International, submitted the highest yielding entry. The next highest yield also came from Oregon as submitted by Derek Berger, who also farms with the sixth-generation family business. In the spring category for irrigated wheat, Oregon once again came through with a new submission by Jess Batchford in Baker County taking 1st.

While yield is one factor, the quality of wheat that Oregon and Pacific Northwest is known for throughout the world is also important within the contest. National wheat yield contest winners submit samples for quality and baking testing, with results available in the new year.

In recognition of their outstanding achievements, the national winners will be honored with a trip to the Commodity Classic in February 2024, hosted in Houston, TX. The accolades will culminate in a special celebration at the National Wheat Foundation Winner's Reception on February 28, 2024. We congratulate all the national winners and our outstanding Oregon growers!

Wheat Growers Welcome Support for Global Food Assistance and Trade Promotion

Jessica Chambers, the Rushlight Agency

U.S. wheat growers will have the opportunity to increase global food assistance and expand export market access under new USDA funding programs. In October, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced the commitment of $2.3 billion in funding from the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to increase global food assistance and expand export market access. These funds will have a direct benefit to individuals suffering from hunger. They will also provide needed support for leveling the playing field for U.S. wheat growers who export wheat overseas.

Out of the total CCC funds, $1 billion will go toward donations through food aid programs to support global food security. "Additional funding for food assistance programs will help address the most urgent humanitarian needs in a generation," said National Association of Wheat Growers President and Oregon wheat grower, Brent Cheyne. Chair of

the Food Aid Working Group and Oregon Wheat CEO, Amanda Hoey stated that wheat makes up the largest portion of emergency food assistance managed by USAID's Food for Peace office. "It is a natural demonstration of the generosity of U.S. farmers and their ability to produce an abundance of commodities that can be shared around the world."

The remaining $1.3 billion in funding will support a new Regional Agricultural Promotion Program. It will bridge the gap in funds from the expiring Agricultural Trade Promotion program, which is set to expire this year. FAS export market development programs play a critical role in identifying new opportunities for export growth by allowing U.S. wheat growers to have on-the-ground representation in potential markets. U.S. Wheat is an important partner in these efforts, along with state wheat commissions. The funds provided through FAS allows for strategic partnerships to be built and solidify relationships with overseas customers.

One example of the direct impact these efforts have to growers in the Pacific Northwest came after a severe drought changed the typical protein levels of soft white wheat in the 2021 crop. U.S. Wheat used Market Access Program funding to test and demonstrate that even with a higher-than-average percentage of protein, soft white wheat would continue to meet expected weak gluten strength and baking characteristics they depend on to maintain the excellent quality cake and confectionary products they produce. As a result, sales of soft white wheat from the Pacific Northwest were not lost to competing supplies from Canada or Australia.

Ultimately, the commitment of this funding will support the growth of U.S. wheat in international markets, while also increasing global food assistance. "Additional funds dedicated to supporting U.S. wheat growers will have a positive impact both on Oregon Wheat growers and the entire U.S. economy, as well as aiding food supply needs around the world," said Dana Tuckness, Oregon Wheat Commission Chair. "These investments have far reaching impacts for our state, our region, and our country."

Stewardship: The Lasting Legacy for Wheat Producers

Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO

"Stewardship to me is this holistic approach that doesn't just look out for my needs, but it's also the needs of the community, the environment, and the whole picture of what my farm means and how it can be a legacy into the future." - Kurt Melville, Cornerstone Farms JV

From first generation to century farms, Oregon Wheat producers are farming for the future. The practices necessary to sustain those farms are once again featured in the Oregon Wheat Stewardship series. Now in its third year, the series allows Oregon Wheat to highlight the hard work and dedication of our farmers.

This year covers the diverse landscape of Oregon wheat: from the Willamette Valley to eastern Oregon, and features producers in both irrigated and dryland operations. The series focuses on the fact that our farmers understand their unique responsibility of both caring for the land today, while also preserving it for future generations. In a series of five short videos and one longer segment, it highlights growers talking about what it means to them to serve as stewards of the land, incorporate new technologies to support sustainability of their farms, engage in practices to continually improve soil health, and use research to address future challenges.

During video production, which occurred over the course of a full year from seeding to harvest operations, there was a recurring set of remarks. These comments naturally led to a few themes for the series shorts:

Investing in Research: From variety screening to disease and quality considerations, Oregon Wheat's investments to research have a big impact to helping farmers keep ahead of the challenges facing their farms. Chris Williams, W4 Farms, noted that "those [investments] help us make the best decisions we can for the greatest impact to our farm, for cost savings and the least impact to the environment." It is about not only the current issues growers are tackling, but also thinking towards what is coming ahead. "The research for us has to stay two or three steps ahead of the challenges coming down the pike" stated Amy Kaser, Kaser Diamond K farms.

Improving Soil Health: When talking about caring for the soil, Emery Gentry expressed the bottom-line fact for why he invests in efforts to build topsoil and keep it healthy and growing: "Without it, I'd be out of business," he says. Each individual in the series emphasized practices that allow them to care for the soil and ultimately work to leave it in even better condition.

Adopting New Technology: Shifts over time in farming techniques and increasingly having access to more precision ag tools have changed the landscape of farming. It is clear that

A 'behind the scenes' look at Oregon Wheat stewards filming at C&L Farms

Oregon wheat producers are innovators in the field and often are also early adopters of new technologies. That innovation comes from many places, but in part out of necessity to continue operations: to save fuel, reduce fertilize use, and most efficiently use resources. "It's a win-win for everybody. For us, for the environment, and my operators," stated Collin Crocker, C&L Farms.

Farming for Future Generations: Finally, an eye to how to continue farms through all the challenges and provide opportunities for the next generation shined through each segment. "We have been very fortunate as a fifth-generation farm to have family members, throughout our legacy, that understand the concept that you aren't farming for today's people. You're actually farming the ground for tomorrow, and the generations ahead of us," emphasized Tyler Hansell, Hansell Farms. "This ground will produce for you as long as you put in the time and effort to make sure the ground is going to be there for generations to come."

The efforts are not something to be taken lightly as Helle and Bruce Ruddenklau reflected: "We're here for a pretty short time and yet, for years and years to come, this farmland has to produce food and fiber for the rest of the world. And this soil is all we have. It needs to feed us, but it needs to be feeding us 500 years from now and longer. It's quite the level of responsibility we have." That legacy and that responsibility crosses our membership. While this year's series provides an inside glance into a portion, we are pleased to share stories of stewardship in our ongoing effort to educate the public on the hard work it takes for Oregon wheat farmers to feed the world with the highest quality wheat.

The Votes Are In: Oregon Wheat Photos Reflect Hard Work Around the State

Congratulations to Theresa Peterson for her winning submission to the 2023 Oregon Wheat Photo Contest. We would like to thank everyone who took part in the contest: Paul Bird, EmmaLee Demianew, Josh Duling, Christina Hagerty, Kathy McCullough, Theresa Peterson, and Kari Pinkerton Silcox. Voting was extremely competitive, given the incredible shots captured. Take a look through an amazing wheat year with the photo contributions to the 2023 contest.

Final Trade Teams of the Season

The final trade teams of the season visited Oregon, following a remarkable year that saw individuals from each of our major markets visiting the state. The last trade team was hosted with the U.S. Wheat Associates Hong Kong/China regional office. They were undertaking a first-hand look at the U.S. wheat supply chain and quality management systems for eight wheat and flour industry managers with China's COFCO agribusiness company. The team represented both the buying and the processing sides of COFCO, China's major food trading and production group.

Jeff Coey, USW Regional Vice President, stated: "USW has been working to bring a team of COFCO managers to the United States for several years now, but several obstacles have prevented us from realizing our plans. The resumption of regular travel now allows us to bring them over to provide a personal look not only at the crop just harvested, but also the prospects for next year's crop." It was six years in development to bring the trade team to the U.S. to demonstrate to these purchase and quality managers that U.S. farmers, strong rail and river transport system, third-party quality certification and economical ocean freight from the PNW and Gulf provide a trusted source of wheat. The Oregon Wheat Commission hosted the team at the end of October in Portland.

Century Farm Status Affirms the Durability and Sustainability of Oregon Wheat

Tayleranne Bray, the Rushlight Agency

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program honors farm and ranch families with century-long connections to the land. This year, three of the five farms and ranches honored as Century Farms /Ranches are connected to wheat production. Of the six awarded the Sesquicentennial (150-year award) Farm status, four include connections to Oregon wheat.

"It is a testament to the sustainability of our farms to last across generations and achieve centennial and sesquicentennial status," stated Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO.

2023 Century Farms with Oregon Wheat Connections:

Craig Family Ranch: Founded in Union County in 1901 by Daniel & Lydia Craig.

The Craig family arrived in Oregon in 1889, settling in the Grand Ronde Valley in Union County. In 1901, Daniel and Lydia Craig acquired 70 acres in Summerville, started a garden and built their home. They had five children, and in 1938, their eldest, George, and his wife Dot, purchased the farm. In 1949, Thomas and Dorothy Craig bought the farm, raising cattle, sheep, and pigs, while also growing hay and grain. Thomas also dealt in horses and was involved in timber farming. Dallas and Bonnie, their son and daughter-in-law, later managed the farm, enhancing irrigation, expanding livestock, and renovating the original house. Sadly, the home was destroyed by fire in 1991. Today, Stephen, Dallas' brother, oversees day-to-day farming and part of the land is leased for cattle grazing. The Craigs continue to manage timber on the land. A new home, built in 2011 by Dallas and Bonnie, stands on the same site. Dallas is the great-grandson of founders Daniel and Lydia Craig.

Maney West Farm: Founded in Umatilla County in 1882 by David Gordon Jr.

In 1872, David Gordon Jr. left Pennsylvania with his family and settled in Umatilla County. In 1882, he fulfilled his dream of owning a wheat farm in South Juniper Canyon, 20 miles north of Pendleton. He hand-dug a well, built a two-room homestead, and began clearing the land. In 1888, he married Lieuvicia Newkirk, and their family grew to include nine children. In 1892, David's claim on his 160-acre homestead was granted. In the next decade, David added six more quarters to his farm. In 1916, his sons, Chester and Charles, took over as partners. Chester married Esther Narkaus in 1917 and bought out his brother's share in 1919. Esther contributed to family expenses by raising chickens and selling eggs. The '30s brought improvements like a two-bedroom addition to the house and a diesel tractor. In the '40s, a large grain bin and 640 more acres were added. In 1946, Chester's son-in-law, Fred Westersund, became a partner, converting surplus Army trucks into farm vehicles. The '50s saw the addition of a machinery repair shop and a new house for Fred, Norma, and their daughters. In 1976, Patrick Maney joined the farm, and mustard and canola were introduced. In 1993, field terraces were added to prevent erosion. Today, Benjamin Maney, Pat's son, runs the farm, living in the 1882 house with his family, including their son, Rhett, representing the sixth generation on the farm.

Pimm Farms, Inc.: Founded in Linn County in 1917 by John Pimm.

In 1917, the John Pimm family moved from Philomath to a farm in Linn County. In 1921, a portion of the farm was deeded to John's son, Frank. In 1924, Frank inherited the rest of the property and initially raised prunes, until 1938 when he transitioned to more profitable crops.

Frank married Myrtle in 1939, and they expanded the farm while raising two children, Richard and Mildred. The farm remained under Myrtle's ownership until 1992 when it transferred to Richard and Mildred. Jack, Richard's eldest son, began full-time farming in 1972. In 1995, the farm transitioned to Jack and his wife, and later to the Pimm Family Limited Partnership in 2000. Today, Pimm Farms cultivates various grass seeds and cover crops, and is run by Eric Pimm, the great-great-grandson of founder, John Pimm.

2023 Sesquicentennial

Harnisch Farms Inc.: Founded in Linn County in 1863 by JJ Davis.

In 1863, JJ Davis bought land in Linn County and he and his wife Mary Miller started farming. When JJ passed away in 1889, the farm went to his son JB, who returned with his wife Rosa. Early crops included wheat, barley, flax, vetch, oats, potatoes, and field corn. When JB died in 1904, CB Harnisch, JB's nephew, inherited the property. During his time on the farm, he constructed several buildings, including the Honeymoon house. In 1948, CB's son Henry took over the farm, alongside his brothers Walter and Albert. They grew sugar beet seed, cannery squash, grains, and beets during WWII. In 1967 Albert's son David and his wife Esther assumed ownership. David diversified the crops to include peppermint, filberts, grass seed, wheat, dill, garlic, and specialty seeds. They also maintained a small beef cow herd.

In 2006, the family planted mixed conifers and managed the forest. Three homes now stand on the property.

Midway Ranches: Founded near Heppner, Oregon in 1873 by Albert Wright.

In 1872, Albert and Julia Wright, along with their children, purchased 120 acres on Rhea Creek in what is now Morrow County. After arriving in 1853, they settled in Oregon City before moving to Eastern Oregon. In 1883, they retired, leaving their son Silas Wright in charge. Silas, and his brother George, expanded the ranch. Later, Silas's sons Alonzo and Moses joined the farm, and in 1916, his third son Orian leased it. Orian and his brother Silas Delbert raised sheep, cattle, and hay. When Orian suffered a heart attack, he called his son Orian Albert back to the ranch. Orian Albert improved the ranch, plowing new ground for wheat fields and creating diversion ditches. The ranch earned a Century Farm & Ranch designation in 1973. Dean, Orian Albert's son, became a partner in the ranch in 1978, and it was named "Wright's Century Ranch." Dianna Wright, the great-great-granddaughter of founders Albert and Julia, and her husband Gerald Hoeft joined the ranch in 1980. The ranch is now known as Midway Ranches, reflecting its history as a mail stop between The Dalles and Canyon City (in the 1880s). The original homestead serves as a family history museum.

Lee Family Farm: Founded in Umatilla County in 1871 by Hiram Benoni Lee.

In 1867 Hiram Benoni Lee and his family traveled the Oregon Trail to the Walla Walla Valley. By 1871, Hiram filed a land claim near his mother and stepfather's property. He initially used the land for livestock grazing and built a cabin. In 1877, Hiram married Sarah Moore, and they had six children. The original home on the property was built in 1877/8. Hiram was an active community member, serving on the Dry Creek school board and as an Umatilla County commissioner. When Hiram retired in 1915, his youngest son, Robert and his wife Ada took over the farming operations. To cope with water shortages, the Lees experimented with various crops, including wheat, barley, hay, dryland sunflowers, milo, peas, dry peas, and straw. In 1957, Robert passed the farm to John and Patricia Lee, who expanded and purchased additional irrigated land. In 1972, John D. Lee became a partner in the farming operation, and in 1976, he and Deborah Lee extended and modernized the 1878 home. In 2011, Nathan and Nika Lee took over the farmstead. Today, the farm raises dryland wheat, straw, horses, chickens, ducks, and goats. The Six generations of the Lee family has lived on this historic homestead near Milton-Freewater, Oregon since 1871.

Pimm Farm Inc.: Founded in Linn County in 1870 by Robert L. Smith.

In 1870, Robert L. Smith purchased 240 acres in Linn County. Robert raised cattle and grain until his death in 1911. The plot of land was originally split between his four sons. Two years later, Dr. William E. Smith and Clara Smith Beal, also children of Robert, purchased the property from their siblings. William and his family farmed the land until 1941, when Clara and her husband moved back to the farm. Clara's grandniece, Doris Smith, began farming the property in 1947 with her husband Richard Pimm. Doris and Richard continued to farm the property after Clara's death in 1979, with Clara's daughter Enid Johnstone inheriting ownership of the farm. When Enid died in 1996, her three children inherited the property and sold it to their cousin Jack Pimm. In 1999, the family put their holdings in a Family Limited Partnership and passed this farm onto Jack's sons, Eric and Rick. Today, Eric Pimm owns and operates Pimm Farms with his family.

Today there are 1,257 Century Farms and Ranches in Oregon. A total of 57 Sesquicentennial farm families have been recognized in the program. Award recipients receive a certificate signed by the Governor and Director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Historic roadside signs are imprinted with the founder's name and the year the ranch or farm was established.

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program is administered by the Oregon Agricultural Education Foundation. The Oregon Wheat Foundation provides financial support to the program, along with a number of other ag groups. The application deadline for 2024 is May 1st and information is available at www.centuryfarm.oregonfb.org.

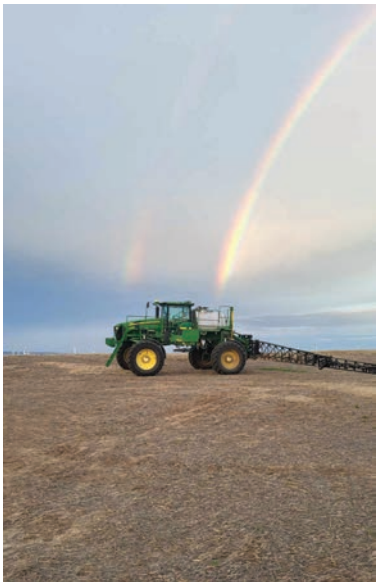
Happy 'New Year' from Oregon Wheat

The optimism of each new year is present with winter wheat seeding operations and the promise of the next year's crop potential. For some years, that is an easier optimism than others. With precipitation around most of the state, we tracked close to average in timing for planting this year. Take a look a photos submitted from around the state:

Wade Bingaman, Union County

Thomas Bernards, Washington County

Melissa Lindsey, Morrow County



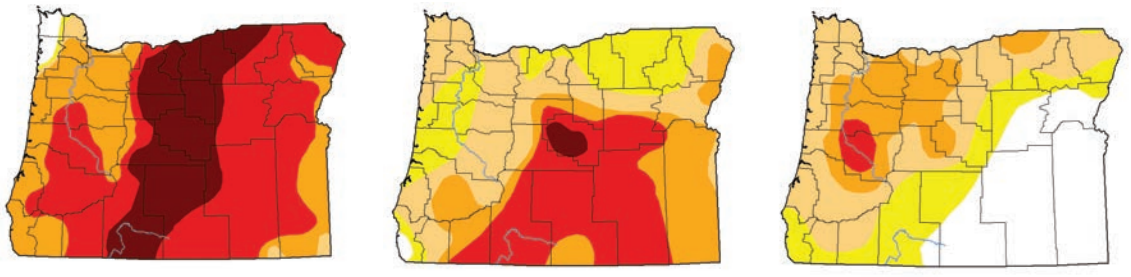
Bryce Coelsch, Sherman County

Erin Heideman, Morrow County

Amy Kaser, Wasco County

Kyle Weimar, Wasco County

US Drought Monitor



November 2, 2021 | November 1, 2022 | October 31, 2023

ODA Director Appointed

Governor Kotek announced Lisa Charpilloz Hanson as the new Director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). Charpilloz Hanson was most recently serving as the Executive Director of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. She brings two decades of leadership, policy direction, and program administration to the role, including 15 years as Deputy Director at ODA.

Oregon Wheat welcomes her in this leadership role and looks forward to working with her in supporting Oregon's agriculture industry. The Oregon Senate will take up her confirmation as permanent director in November.

Oregon Wheat Days at the Capitol Approaches

Dylan Frederick, the Rushlight Agency

Every February, growers from around the state head to the Oregon State Capitol in Salem for an annual event known as "Wheat Day" that shares the day with Oregon's Birthday. Wheat Day gives growers an opportunity to meet face-to-face with legislators to discuss bills and issues that are most pressing to the industry. The meetings and events that take place over the course of the day typically consist of a legislators' reception hosted by the League (along with the official cake cutting for Oregon's Birthday), as well as a series of one-on-one meetings with key legislators.

Wheat Day is an opportunity for members of the League to discuss with State Senators and Representatives how policy decisions impact wheat farms and the operations of growers. As in prior years, the advocacy conducted during Wheat Days is a mutually beneficial way to build relationships with legislators in Salem and highlight the reality of how wheat farms operate in the state.

"As Senator of District 16, I was honored to attend the Wheat Growers' legislative reception in 2023. It was such a productive opportunity to talk to wheat producers from around our state about their operations and the impact bills have on them," said Oregon Senator Suzanne Weber (R-Tillamook).

The in-person interactions and relationship building are invaluable to the long-term advocacy work the League and its lobby team do on a continual basis. Sherman County President Thad Eakin, who attended the event in 2023 said, "as a grower, I think making sure our voice is heard and understood is becoming more important every day. The Wheat Day event is a way of making sure we're all being heard."

Oregon Wheat invites you to join us at the Oregon State Capitol for the 2024 Wheat Days! The 2024 legislative reception will be held on February 13th, followed by Wheat Day on Feb 14th. For more information, visit www.owgl.org/events or email communications@owgl.org.

Soft White Wheat Quality Report Highlights Functionality and Blending Opportunities

Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO

An informed buyer is a better buyer when it comes to the purchase of wheat. The annual crop quality report, produced in coordination with U.S. Wheat Associates (USW), provides the transparent and objective data sets needed to support our customers in making purchases. It is one tool in preparing more informed buyers. The other tool: presenting that information directly to customers through USW Crop Quality Seminars. This year, I had the opportunity to present the soft white report for the Crop Quality Seminars in Southeast Asia.

While the crop quality report is available for all six classes, with the majority of wheat produced in Oregon being soft white, the Commission has a particular focus on the U.S. Pacific Northwest 2023 Harvest Soft White Wheat Quality Report. Every year, the Oregon Wheat Commission, in partnership with USW, Idaho Wheat Commission and the Washington Grain Commission, collectively support development of the report which includes grade, flour and end-product data.

The base of the crop quality report is the methodology used to ensure a statistically valid sample collection processes and analysis, using rigorous testing mechanisms. Throughout harvest, wheat samples are collected by professional grain handlers and inspection agencies from country elevators and commercial wheat handling operations. For the soft white wheat class, the sample collection draw is from the three Pacific Northwest states and covers 95% of total soft white production. This year, a total of 385 soft white and 65 club samples were collected. The grain was then graded by the Federal Grain Inspection Service and samples were analyzed by the Wheat Marketing Center located in Portland, Oregon.

The resulting data compilation is a substantial resource for customers. Export markets, in particular, know that they can rely on information in the report to understand the functionality of the U.S. wheat crop. The message to buyers for 2023: We have an excellent range of quality and functionality, and buyers can expect that the crop continues to reflect the characteristics that give it high value for its price. Combining the typical low dockage (0.4% on average), with the low moisture (9.1% on average), there is more value in each cargo purchased by international buyers from U.S. soft white wheat producers.

Overall, we continue to 'make the grade,' with most of the soft white crop at Grade 1. For samples that came in at Grade 2, the distinction on why is important. Generally the grade 2 samples were due mainly to test weight issues, rather than defects or low falling numbers. Breaking down the test weight distribution, the lower test weights were correlated with the higher protein composites that were more drought-stressed, while the low and medium protein composites both aligned with the 5-year average for their test weights.

This year, we overcame a hot, dry season to produce highly functional soft white wheat. Those dry conditions impacted our yields, though, and contributed to a crop with above-average protein, with an average of 11.1% protein on a 12% moisture basis. Yet, the protein maintained appropriate functionality and offers opportunities for cookies, crackers, steamed breads, and hard/soft blends. In addition, we brought forward an extensive carryover from 2022, which lends to options to blend wheat to meet needs. Especially in relation to protein, having a significant amount of last year's crop still in the bins will help fill the gap at the lower protein end of the spectrum.

The report contains positive news for the crop functionality: from Solvent Retention Capacity values to producing a range of good to excellent end products. The report highlights that gluten strength is weak to moderate, as is desired and typical for the soft white class. In Wheat Marketing Center's finished products analysis, they reflected good characteristics across all uses and demonstrated the versatility of our wheat.

Taking the information direct to our customers through crop quality seminars in our major market areas is the next important step for supporting informed buyers. In November, I joined the SE Asia crop quality seminar team. The travel came with challenges, beginning with ash from a volcanic eruption on the Russian Peninsula causing the cancellation of the flight to the Philippines and the need to divert directly to Indonesia. Our USW Manila office quickly adapted, and I recorded a virtual presentation before departure to be used during the segments I was in transit. For subsequent visits in Indonesia and Thailand, I was able to deliver information in person and interact directly with our customers to help them understand the intricacies of the performance of the 2023 crop.

Sharing the high-quality data produced in this yearly report fundamentally aids our buyers in not only their purchase decisions, but also in their confidence of the quality of our product. I was pleased to be able to share with customers that, despite all of the challenges our wheat producers encountered this year, we still have the strong value proposition in place. A high quality, low moisture wheat that will allow them to continue to produce the best quality products from Oregon and PNW wheat.

AgriStress Helpline: Supporting the Agriculture Community

Tayleranne Bray, the Rushlight Agency

Agriculture is a demanding and unique industry that can take a toll on the mental health of farmers, ranchers, and their families. Wheat farming in Oregon is no exception to these pressures. Earlier this year, the Oregon legislature passed Senate Bill 955, allocating funds to Oregon State University to implement and operate the AgriStress Helpline, a free resource that provides crucial and confidential support for people working in the agriculture industry. This one-time funding makes Oregon the seventh state to link to the AgriStress Helpline. A coalition of 27 farming and healthcare-related organizations, including Oregon Wheat, supported the bi-partisan effort to bring this important service to Oregon.

The AgriStress Helpline is a vital lifeline for individuals in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing industries. It operates 24/7 and offers free and confidential support through phone calls and text messages. The helpline stands out for its inclusivity, providing interpretation services in 160 languages for phone calls, and offering text messaging support in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Trained professionals staff the helpline, ensuring that individuals receive appropriate assistance.

Crisis specialists at the helpline receive specialized training that goes beyond general crisis intervention. They gain insight into the distinct culture, values, stressors, and lived experiences of people in the agriculture industry. This allows them to better relate to the callers, understand their concerns, and provide more targeted support. This helpline differs from the more widely recognized 988 crisis hotline because of the specialized training the crisis specialists receive.

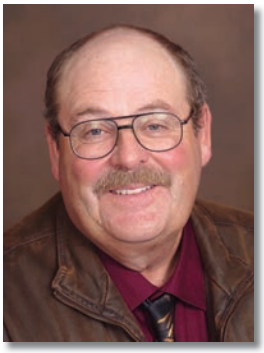
One crucial advantage of the AgriStress Helpline is its access to a state-specific database of agricultural and health resources. This curated database ensures that crisis specialists can connect callers with locally relevant support. This targeted approach is essential for helping individuals facing stressors that are often unique to their region.

Agriculture workers play a pivotal role in society by providing food and resources. However, their work often involves significant challenges that impact their mental health, such as: isolation, unpredictable weather, limited access to healthcare services, commodity price fluctuations, and the stigma often associated with mental health. Recognizing these challenges, and providing a helpline that understands the unique stressors of the industry, can help lower some of these barriers.

Calling or texting the AgriStress Helpline is a straightforward process. When you reach out, you will be asked to provide your ZIP code. This information allows the helpline to connect you with state-specific resources and referrals if needed. Once you've entered your ZIP code, you'll be connected with a crisis intervention specialist who is ready to listen, provide emotional support, and offer you resources based on your unique situation.

The helpline also offers a 24-hour follow-up call for those who wish to have ongoing support. This follow-up call can be invaluable for those who are going through a particularly challenging time or who want to ensure they have continued support. Anyone can call the helpline, ensuring that no one in the agriculture industry is turned away.

The AgriStress Helpline is a lifeline for wheat farmers in Oregon. By offering specialized support, understanding the unique challenges they face, and connecting them with essential resources, the helpline is making a significant impact on the well-being of these workers. In a demanding profession where mental health is crucial for continued success, the AgriStress Helpline exists as a beacon of hope and support, ready to assist those in need 24/7. Oregon's Agristress helpline is now live and ready to provide support. If you need help, please call or text 833-897-2474.



Going Once, Going Twice, Sold!

Dana Tuckness

OWC Chair

OREGON WHEAT COMMISSION

I have been attending farm machinery auctions since I was young, traveling to them with my father and learning to understand the auctioneer's jargon. That continued when I started my own operation, sometimes picking up much needed equipment at a very good price, sometimes not such a good price, and many times going home with nothing at all. I have always been able to understand auctioneers no matter how fast they talk. Such was not the case at a recent auction I happened to be in attendance for in Cordoba, Argentina. Every year in Argentina, they auction off the first lot of harvested wheat to the local millers to kick off the season. The proceeds of the auction go to benefit a children's organization. Now, I was not in Argentina looking to buy any wheat: I was there with a group from U.S. Wheat, making connections with customers and to hopefully create some new opportunities for selling our U.S. crop, at the 2023 Latin American Industrial Millers conference (ALIM). The auction came on the third day of the conference, and to say the least, was extremely confusing. The auction was of course in Spanish, and I was listening to an interpreter in a set of headphones trying to keep up with the auctioneer. It was quite an experience!

The ALIM kicked off with a reception in which over 500 people were in attendance. It was a chance to re-acquaint with people I had met at last year's conference and meet many new ones. The economies in many of these countries are struggling, and the bakeries are not ordering much flour in advance, so in turn the millers are not purchasing large quantities of wheat very far ahead. One miller told me "The soft white wheat grown in the PNW (Pacific Northwest) is the most coveted of all the wheat." Along with the usual cookies, cakes and crackers, they are blending it with other classes of wheat for pastas and breads and for whiter colors in these products. They are very happy with the quality and the way soft white mills. Logistics are a problem however, as many millers don't use large enough quantities for it to be economically feasible to ship from the Pacific Northwest. Some millers try to work together to get a large enough order to make shipping work for them.

Many of the ALIM speakers' presentations were focused on politics of Latin America, with each individual country having a representative speak. Of course, you can't have a discussion on wheat anywhere in the world without talking about the war between Russia and Ukraine, and what effect it might have in the future. The conference ended with an excellent presentation by Mike Spiers (USW Vice-President of overseas operations), on the quality, service, and value of buying U.S. wheat. He encouraged buyers to consider the favorable price, which comes at a time when U.S. and global supplies of wheat are actually quite low. I would like to thank the USW representatives in attendance from the Santiago and Mexico City offices. They are a very energetic group and are very knowledgeable and passionate about the work they do for us. It was a pleasure working with them at this conference.

Panelists at Latin American Millers conference

Immediately following the ALIM conference, it was a four-hour ride to Rosario, Argentina to take a look at the HB4 wheat developed by Bioceres. Argentina has been in a severe drought for quite some time, but it rained for two straight days and there was water standing in most of the fields. This rain came too late for most of their wheat crop as most of it had already matured. HB4 is a genetically modified (GM) wheat that was developed to be drought resistant. There is no GM wheat being grown in the U.S. at this time, and I, along with USW, believe there shouldn't be until our customers are willing to accept it. I have been directly involved with growing both conventional and GM sugar beets and corn and have

seen the benefits to growers of these GM crops. There were five U.S. farmers and two USW representatives observing the Bioceres test plots. Some of the plots had very substantial differences and some, not so much. Overall, I believe there is good potential, and this could be very beneficial to dryland wheat farmers in the future, but not until we have all of our main markets interested to purchase GM. At the current time, many of our key markets retain concerns over GM wheat.

As for the wheat auction, even though I didn't have a bidders paddle I made sure to sit on my hands, so as not to make an accidental bid. It was an interesting trip which will hopefully reap some benefit for the U.S. wheat industry, in particular those of us in Oregon.

"Trust in God and keep your powder dry" (British General Oliver Cromwell, during British civil war, 1642)

US Wheat team at ALIM

Understanding the Wheat Supply Chain: Join the 17th Annual Grower Workshop

Tana Simpson, Associate Administrator

On February 27-28, 2024, the Oregon Wheat Commission will host its annual Grower Workshop in Portland. For those who have not yet attended, this workshop focuses on the development and marketing of Oregon wheat. The tours are designed to give an overall understanding of the work being done to keep Oregon wheat competitive in the global marketplace and maximize grower profitability.

"This workshop gave great insight into the wheat life cycle after delivery to the local elevator, from Shaver Barge lines to the export terminals, USDA graders and across the world. Also highlighted were the importance of variety selection and the impact it has on end use quality and the challenges faced in different markets," stated Jeff Markman, Wasco County farmer and workshop attendee. "The sophistication of the entire process was impressive and proves again why US Wheat is in demand in the global market."

Tours will include a visit to the Wheat Marketing Center, focusing on the quality testing done in the lab and the indications those results offer about end use products. It will feature discussions with a grain exporter for insight into logistics and facility management to meet customer specifications. The workshop continues through to the end-use, touring the facilities of a wheat user to see how grain quality affects product development and production. Finally, it covers the importance of the Columbia River System and river transportation, with a personalized tour on a Shaver tugboat. Additional topics include updates on Oregon State University research, U.S. Wheat Associates marketing efforts

and a hands-on grain grading demonstration.

If you are interested in participating in this or future Grower Workshops please contact Corey Shrader, Oregon Wheat Commission at projectadmin@oregonwheat.org or (503) 467-2161.

Improving Resistance to Septoria Leaf Blotch in Wheat

Chris Mundt, Professor; Bob Zemetra, Professor Emeritus; David Cobertera, former graduate student

Septoria tritici leaf blotch is the second-most important disease of wheat in the Willamette Valley of Oregon, behind stripe rust. High genetic variation and a large population size of this fungal pathogen have enabled it to adapt over time to both fungicides and host plant resistance. For example, major gene resistance in the wheat variety 'Gene' lasted only two years in commercial production. An alternative is to select for wheat varieties with minor gene resistance, i.e., resistance controlled by multiple genes, each with a small effect, that cumulatively increase the level of resistance and slow adaptation of the pathogen.

Our work began years ago as a genetics study in collaboration with former OSU wheat breeder Jim Peterson. Genetic mapping populations were developed among important Pacific Northwest wheat varieties with differing genetic backgrounds and different susceptibilities to Septoria tritici blotch. One of these populations resulted from a cross between wheat cultivars 'Foote' and 'Madsen', with 217 genetically uniform progeny lines being developed in the greenhouse. These lines were increased in the field, and then tested against wheat stripe rust in work previously described in the December 2015 issue of Oregon Wheat. Emphasis then turned to Septoria with the work of former graduate student David Cobertera, who was co-advised by Bob Zemetra and Chris Mundt. The 217 progeny lines and relevant checks were grown in five field environments (combinations of locations and years). Field disease readings were then correlated with DNA sequences developed through a process called "genotyping by sequencing" to identify quantitative trait loci

Researchers' Name and Title:

Chris Mundt, Professor

Collaborators:

Bob Zemetra, Professor Emeritus; Ryan Graebner, Assistant Professor; Christina Hagerty, Associate Professor

2023 Grant Title and Commission Funding Levels:

Screening for Resistance to Major Wheat Diseases in Oregon, $54,844

Grant summary:

A combination of locations, production practices, and inoculation techniques will be used to provide high levels of disease pressure in trials of stripe rust, Cephalosporium stripe, Fusarium crown rot, strawbreaker foot rot, and Septoria tritici blotch. Inoculated trials for sharp eyespot will be conducted for a subset of nurseries, and barley yellow dwarf data will be taken in any nurseries where it occurs naturally. Resistance levels of entries in statewide yield trials will be determined to evaluate potential new varietal releases for levels of disease resistance and to allow growers to make the best varietal decisions when new varieties are first available to them. Resistance levels of entries in elite and advanced yield trials from the OSU Wheat Breeding Program will be used to determine which lines to advance in the program towards potential release. We will continue evaluating data from mapping populations to evaluate the genetics of inheritance and identify genetic markers that can be used to screen for resistance to disease more efficiently in a breeding program. The studies described above are crucial to continued progress in the OSU Wheat Breeding Program, increased profitability for Oregon wheat growers, and ability to adopt conservation tillage practices.

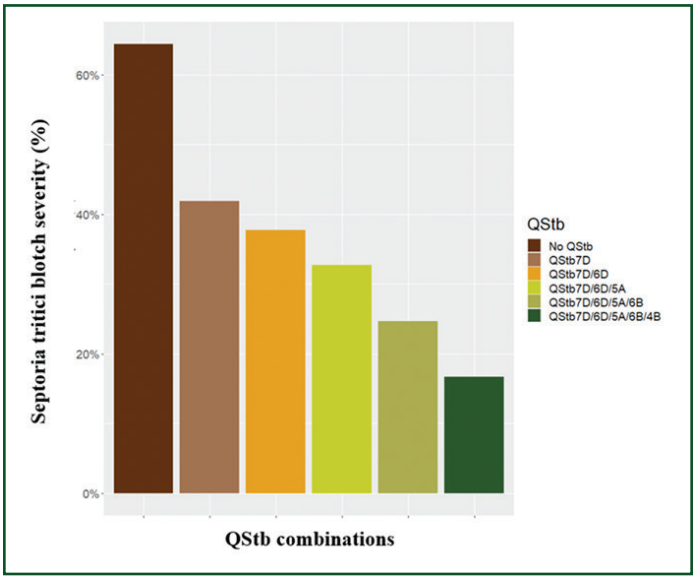


Figure 1 legend: Effects of combinations of quantitative trait loci for resistance (QStb) on severity of Septoria tritici leaf blotch averaged over five field experiments.

(QTL), i.e., regions of wheat DNA that are associated with a trait of interest. Five QTL for resistance were identified in multiple environments. Severity of Septoria tritici leaf blotch decreased with increasing number of QTL in progeny (Figure 1). Progeny containing all five QTL reduced Septoria severity by 75% in comparison with progeny that contained no QTL for resistance. Resistance QTL were contributed by both Foote and Madsen.

Ten progeny of the above population were selected for high levels of stripe rust resistance in earlier work. Further testing showed that three of these ten had a level of resistance to Septoria greater than any commercially available variety. Field testing indicated that these lines, though agronomically acceptable, were not sufficiently competitive for yield in comparison with varieties recently released by the public and private sectors. Thus, crosses of these lines were made with higher yielding varieties and advanced breeding lines from the OSU Wheat Breeding and Genetics Program. A series of F5 lines were developed from these crosses. Half of the lines were discarded based on Andrew Ross's analysis of kernel hardness, a key quality component of soft white winter wheat. The remaining 78 lines were grown in the 2021/22 season field for evaluation of Septoria severity in replicated observation plots and in an unreplicated preliminary yield trial (Figure 2). Each vertical line in Figure 2 represents Septoria severity of one of the 78 lines or one of the checks, 'Stephens', 'Madsen', and 'Bobtail'. Stephens wheat is highly susceptible to Septoria and often is used as a susceptible check. Madsen was moderately resistant to Septoria when first released, though much of this resistance eroded over time due to adaptation of the pathogen. Three-fourths of the F5 lines in 2022 showed lower Septoria levels than Bobtail wheat, currently one of our more resistant varieties. The red vertical lines indicate the five highest yielding F5 lines in 2022. The farthest red line to the left, a line with the identifier OR2220557, was the second highest yielding line among the 78 lines in 2022, suggesting that it may be possible to combine improved Septoria resistance and high yield. The most promising lines were evaluated in the Soft White Advanced 2 replicated yield trial in the 2022-23 season. OR2220557 yielded 15% higher than the average line in that trial. Performance of the most promising lines is continuing in the 2023/24 season with the hopes of identifying one or more potential new variety releases. In addition, these lines can serve as sources of Septoria resistance in future wheat variety development.

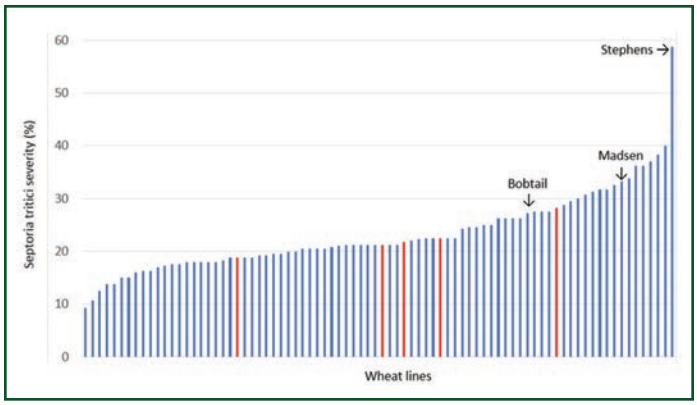


Figure 2 legend: Severity of Septoria tritici leaf blotch for 77 experimental wheat lines and three check varieties. Each blue or red vertical line indicates severity level of a given breeding line or check variety and is the average over four disease observation plots. One experimental line was substantially more susceptible than Stephens and is not shown on the figure. The five red lines indicate Septoria levels for the five highest yielding experimental lines in an unreplicated, preliminary yield trial conducted by the OSU Wheat Breeding Program in 2022.

League Welcomes New Administrative Assistant

In October the Oregon Wheat Growers League welcomed Lucy Kenagy as the new Administrative Assistant and Membership Coordinator. Lucy takes on the role previously held by Cassandra Franklin, who served the League since 2020, following the retirement of Sally Christensen.

"I am excited to welcome Lucy to the team," stated Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat Growers League CEO. "The hiring committee was impressed not only by the professional skill set she brings, but also her enthusiasm for supporting our members and her approachability. She will build upon the work of those before her in the role."

Born and raised in Douglas County, Oregon, Lucy grew up helping her parents run their cattle operation. "As I grew older, my sisters and I started taking red angus and sheep to jackpot shows all over the Pacific Northwest. During that time, I was able to see the variety of landscapes and types of agriculture grown in each region. This gave me a deeper appreciation for all varieties of production agriculture," Lucy shared. That appreciation eventually led to a desire to work for a membership organization like the Oregon Wheat Growers League. "I knew I wanted to work for an operation that supported and promoted agriculture for all that it is." Please join us in welcoming Lucy to the Pendleton office!

How Significant of a Pest is the Cereal Leaf Beetle at Present?

Stuart Reitz, Professor and Director of Malheur Experiment Station

The cereal leaf beetle (CLB) (Figure 1) is a relatively recent invasive pest in the Pacific Northwest, having been first detected in Oregon in 1999, and it now occurs throughout the state and the rest of the PNW region. Larval feeding leaves strips of senescent tissue along the length of leaves. Feeding damage to the flag leaf can reduce yields.

CLB populations vary season to season and year to year so that growers may consider insecticide applications to minimize damage. Economic thresholds can determine when management tactics are warranted https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/ipm-for-the-cereal-leaf-beetle-in-washington-state. In addition, a biological control program started soon after CLB was first detected in Oregon with releases of a host-specific parasitic wasp, Tetrastichus julis (TJ).

With funding ($2,028) through the Oregon Wheat Commission, this project was undertaken to inform whether insecticide applications are economically justifiable and the best timing for insecticide applications, if they are warranted.

Methods

The trial was conducted at the Malheur Experiment Station. A broadcast application of pre-plant fertilizer was made on October 31, 2022. Based on a soil analysis, 100 lb N/acre, 75 lb P/acre and 160 lb S/acre were applied. It was planted on November 3, 2022 with the cultivar 'Iliad'. Three rows of seed were planted per 30" bed with 9" spacing between rows. Seed was planted with a grain drill at a seeding rate corresponding to approximately 110 lb/acre. An additional 100 lb N/acre in the form of urea (46-0-0) was applied on April 24, 2023.

The experimental design was a randomized complete block with four replications. Plots were 4 beds wide (10 feet) and 30 feet long. Weekly sampling for cereal beetles adults began on May 2, 2023 and was conducted for three weeks. Sampling for eggs and larvae began on May 10, 2023 when the wheat was approximately Feeke's stage 7. The main stem of twenty plants per plot was inspected for eggs and larvae. After flag leaf emergence, egg and larval counts were taken separately for the flag leaf and other leaves on each main stem of 20 plants per plot. On July 2, the main stem flag leaf on each of 25 plants per plot was rated for cereal leaf beetle feeding damage. Damage was rated on a 0 – 5 scale (Figure 2). Yield was determined by weighing grain from 100 main stem heads per plot. Grain heads were hand clipped from each plot and the grain was separated for weighing.

Figure 1. Young cereal leaf beetle larva on wheat leaf (left). Note the slimy layer of frass (insect droppings) coating the beetle's body. Larvae move up and down the leaf, leaving strips of damage parallel to the length of the leaf. The damage in this photograph occurred earlier in the season before the wheat headed out. Cereal leaf beetle adult (Right). Adults disperse from grain fields in July to find overwintering sites. Females will then lay eggs the following spring. Larvae will feed on wheat, other small grains and grass crops in the late spring.

Insecticides were applied according to the following timing schedule:

1. Pre-boot application (Feeke's Stage 8)
2. Boot stage application (Feeke's Stage 9)
3. Insecticides applied when the economic thresholds are exceeded. The thresholds are 3 eggs and/or larvae per tiller before the boot stage (< Feeke's Stage 9), and 1 larva per flag leaf after flag leaf emergence (Boot Stage / Feeke's Stage 9 or later).
4. There was an untreated control for each timing.

There were six insecticide treatments: Untreated control, Warrior II (lambda-cyhalothrin), Mustang Maxx (zeta-cypermethrin), Dimilin (diflubenzuron), Lannate (methomyl), and Radiant (spinetoram). Warrior II, Mustang Maxx and Dimilin are three of the most commonly used insecticides for cereal leaf beetle management in the Treasure Valley. Warrior II and Mustang Maxx are inexpensive synthetic pyrethroids, and Dimilin is a relatively inexpensive insect growth regulator that disrupts the ability of immature beetles to develop successfully. Lannate and Radiant are two different modes

Figure 2. Damage ratings for cereal leaf beetle feeding on flag leaves of winter wheat. 0 = no feeding damage; 1 = minor feeding damage of one young larval feeding track; 2 = mild feeding damage from more extensive feeding by one larva; 3 = moderate feeding damage of one or more larvae; 4 = major feeding damage from multiple larvae; 5 = severe feeding damage with a majority of the leaf tissue damaged.

of action that may have greater efficacy against cereal leaf beetle. They are also higher priced products than the lower cost pyrethroids and Dimilin.

Insecticides were applied with a CO2 powered backpack sprayer delivering 20 gallons per acre to assure thorough coverage. In addition, cereal leaf beetle larvae were collected from the borders of areas of the trial and from nearby commercial fields. Larvae were dissected to estimate parasitism levels for T. julis.

Results

Adult CLB were first collected in the field trial on May 17, 2023. CLB larvae and eggs were also first collected at that time, indicating that adults were present in the field for several days before detection. The preboot insecticide application was made on May 25, 2023 and the boot stage application

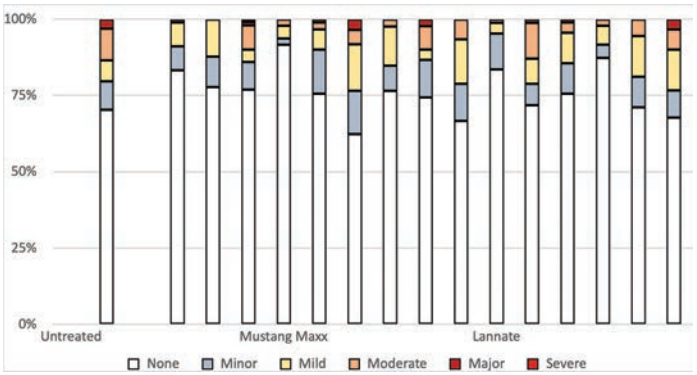


Figure 3. Damage ratings on the primary flag leaf by insecticide treatment and timing. Values are the percentage of plants in each damage category. See text for damage rating descriptions.

was made on May 31, 2023. None of the plots exceeded the economic thresholds for CLB either before or after flag leaf emergence. Therefore, no insecticides were applied in the threshold treatment plots.

CLB populations were low for this trial. Egg numbers never exceeded more than 0.2 per plant. There were no significant differences among treatments in egg numbers. Larval CLB populations were also exceedingly low, averaging less than 0.4 across all treatments. There were no significant differences among treatments in larval numbers. Despite the lack of differences in egg and larval counts during the season, there were significant differences in damage ratings for the flag leaf. Warrior II, Mustang Maxx, Lannate and Radiant treatments when applied at the preboot stage had significantly less damage to the flag leaf than the untreated control. These insecticide treatments had an average of approximately 15% flag leaves damaged compared with 30% in the untreated controls (Figure 3). However, Dimilin applied at the pre-boot stage did not significantly reduce flag leaf damage (24%) compared with the untreated controls. None of the insecticide treatments applied at the boot stage resulted in less damage to the flag leaf than the untreated controls.

There were no significant differences among treatments in yield (Figure 4).

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

Conclusions

CLB populations are variable and do not always warrant insecticide treatments. When insecticide treatments are warranted, timing is an important consideration. Insecticide applications delayed until the boot stage are not as effective as applications made at the pre-boot stage. Synthetic pyrethroids (e.g., Warrior II and Mustang Maxx, which may cost $6 - $8 per acre for the product) are more cost effective than alternative products, such as Lannate and Radiant, which may cost $40 - $50 per acre for the product.

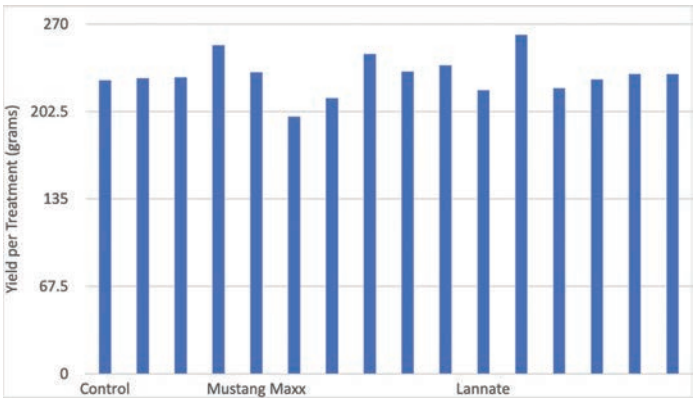

Figure 4. Yield by insecticide treatment and timing. Values are the percentage of plants in each damage category. See text for damage rating descriptions.

Populations of CLB did not exceed economic thresholds, and there were no significant differences in yield among treatments. These results suggest that the current economic thresholds are appropriate for irrigated winter wheat.

Low numbers of CLB parasitized by the TJ parasitoid were collected (Figure 5). Although these recoveries indicate the parasitoid is present in Malheur County, more extensive, systematic sampling is needed to accurately characterize parasitism levels.

Figure 5. Cereal leaf beetle larva on a wheat leaf. Notice the feeding damage. This larva was dissected and was found to be parasitized by the TJ wasp.

Acknowledgements: I appreciate the assistance of the Malheur Experiment Station Bug Counter Team: Hannah Rose, Ian Trenkel, Maddox Atagi, Bennett Johnson, Jimena Anguiano, Helen Vega, and Malheur Experiment Station Farm Supervisor Kyle Wieland.

Foundation Increases Scholarship Funds: Applications Open

The Oregon Wheat Foundation announces the opening of its 2024 scholarship program, which is currently accepting applications from Oregon high school seniors. This year the Foundation Board is pleased to increase the amount of each individual scholarship to $2,000. "Recognizing the increasing burden of the cost of tuition, the Foundation wanted to ensure that the next generation of leaders for our industry have access to the resources they need to succeed," stated Foundation Board Chair Tom Winn.

The Foundation scholarship fund is supported through generous grower contributions and through annual fundraising efforts at the tri-state grain convention auction. Chair Winn highlighted the importance of those contributions, noting "We have been gifted a base of funding through leaders who were previously and are currently active in the wheat industry. They understand the importance of supporting students' educational goals. Those contributions help us make the necessary investments to support the scholarship fund."

Up to twelve $2,000 scholarships will be awarded to graduating seniors who are enrolling in a University, Community College or an accredited vocational or technical program.

Scholarship recipients are selected based on school and community involvement, scholastic performance, and an essay on the wheat industry. Eligible individuals include graduating high school seniors who are the child of a grower member of the Oregon Wheat Growers League, or whose parents are employed by a grower member of the Oregon Wheat Growers League. The scholarship is also open to students who have worked seasonally for grower members.

Deadline to apply for the 2024 Oregon Wheat Foundation Scholarships is February 1, 2024. The Foundation looks forward to supporting our future agriculture leaders. Full details and the application are available online at www.oregonwheatfoundation.org.

Homegrown Oregon Wheat Seed

Dylan Frederick, the Rushlight Agency

It's been over 30 years since foundation wheat seed was last produced in Oregon. Now, for the first time in decades, excitement builds for the reintroduction of 'homegrown' Oregon wheat seed with the production of foundation seed in the Willamette Valley.

Foundation class seed is the first generation of seed available to the public and is the basis for the production of registered and certified seed. The certification program recognizes four basic classes of seed: breeder, foundation, registered and certified. Each class represents advancing generations of seed production.

According to Loren Behrman, Owner of Tualatin Valley Seeds, Inc. and Behrman Farms, the genesis of the 'homegrown Oregon' wheat seed program occurred a number of years ago. However, it fully fell into place two years ago, when Oregon State University's Wheat Breeder, Dr. Bob Zemetra, came to Behrman based on a pre-existing Memorandum of Agreement. Dr. Zemetra sought to reproduce OSU breeder seed into foundation seed stock in the state. Loren recalls, "There was a question of how fast we could turn a stock field into seed, and how clean could we make it." Bringing production of seed in state would accelerate the speed of potential release, an innovation Behrman could get behind. He was ready. "We had our cleaners literally sitting there waiting. I wanted it out of the field. The combine guys wanted it out of the combine, we all wanted it in a bag and ready to go, " Behrman explains.

Doug Brandt harvesting foundation seed.

"Everything was spotless. This is truly maximizing the speed, and quality of seed for reproduction." Behrman is pleased with the results, pointing out that homegrown seed stocks provides flexibility for the Oregon wheat breeding program. It pairs well with the existing processes partnered throughout the Pacific Northwest.

"It was an honor to do it. We wanted to show that we could do it and do it fast, do it right, and that we could do it right here," he explained. "We can get a seed stock out in a timely fashion and get a quality that works better for the growers. That's just a win-win."

League Comments on EPA Herbicide Strategy

In the first of a three part approach that will ultimately cover herbicides, pesticides and fungicides, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released their draft herbicide strategy in response to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) 'mega lawsuit.' As proposed, it would have far-reaching consequences as it would change general labels for herbicides and place even higher burdens on growers in specific areas of the state.

The Oregon Wheat Growers League signed a joint ag letter in response to the draft strategy, focusing on the importance of agricultural herbicides uses, while highlighting concerns with the complexity of the proposal; the lack of compliance options for producers/applicators; the financial cost of proposed conservation practices; the anticipated harm the proposal will inflict on producers, agricultural communities, and the environment; as well as ESA and FIFRA statutory concerns with the proposal. The letter also advises EPA to use better data upfront, which would help alleviate jeopardy risk concerns for species, so that the agency may better work with stakeholders to develop more reasonable solutions for those species of concern.

The comment period on the herbicide strategy is now closed and we will continue to work with our delegation and the agency in response to needed changes to the proposed framework.

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